

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

# FSIS NOTICE

43-05

6/30/05

## AVAILABILITY OF GUIDANCE MATERIAL ON RELATIVE HUMIDITY AND TIME/TEMPERATURE FOR COOKING/HEATING FOR THE PRODUCTION OF OTHER READY-TO-EAT MEAT AND POULTRY PRODUCTS

This notice announces the availability of guidance material related to Appendix A, "Compliance Guidelines for Meeting Lethality Performance Standards for Certain Meat and Poultry Products." This guidance material can be found at:

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_and\\_Policies/Compliance\\_Guides\\_Index/index.asp#95-033F](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_and_Policies/Compliance_Guides_Index/index.asp#95-033F)

This notice does not issue any verification procedures to FSIS personnel. However, there have been questions regarding the applicability of relative humidity (RH) for ready-to-eat products. This notice provides clarification regarding these issues.

It is important to note that the RH provisions in Appendix A for cooked, roast, and corned beef (e.g. 90% RH for the entire process; 90% RH for at least 50% of the cooking time but in no case less than 1 hour) apply only to those processes in which the surface moisture of the product can evaporate, and surface drying can occur prior to destruction of the microorganisms. Such processes include the production of meat and poultry jerky and roasts.

For certain other processes, the RH is not significant because the humidity around the product is inherently maintained, and moisture does not have to be added. These processes include but are not limited to:

- immersing the product in a liquid cooking medium;
  - cooking product in a sealed moisture impermeable bag;
  - applying direct heat, such as a grill, heating coil, flame, or rotisserie;
  - cooking product in casings (most casings will prevent or inhibit moisture loss so that the heat resistance of pathogens is not affected during the cooking process);
- or
- cooking beef patties by direct heat.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Inspection Offices;  
T/A Inspectors; Plant Mgt; T/A Plant  
Mgt; TRA; ABB; TSC; Import Offices

**NOTICE EXPIRES:** 7/1/06

**OPI:** OPPED

Please refer questions to the Technical Service Center at 1-800-233-3935.

*/s/ Philip S. Derfler*

Assistant Administrator

Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development